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To linger on the isle of leper men,
 Bare Molokai, where sickly noondays burn,
 Himself a little blighted citizen;
 From heartbreak morn till heartbreak eve to turn
 From its foul company to fix his eyes
 Upon a distant sail, a floating leaf;
 To hear at bedtime for his lullabies
 The strokes of the Pacific on the reef,
 And, in the dark, without a kindly kiss,
 To sob his soul out! Dawn the doom destroy!
 For I shall seek a softer way than this
 For my sweet love, my little leper boy.

To guide his steps! What holier joy could be?
 And with him in his alien path to go!
 But the home voices would be haunting me!
 Then shall he forth, a little outcast? No!
 Silence, my tongue! O speak the terror not!
 I know another way. The cure thereof
 May for eternal tears be had. Forgot
 Be now the creed that I was taught, and love
 Be stronger than Jerusalem's high town!
 Though anguish of my penance never cease,
 Look, Lord of Hosts, look, holy angels, down!
 I give my soul forever for his peace!

II.

THE CHILDREN.

Stephana. Our house has grown so large and still, as though
 Sweet music had just died in all the rooms.
David. And in the garden, where he loves to go,
 There is a hush beneath the heavy blooms.
Stephana. Why has he been three days a prisoner?
 Why does she keep him ever from us all?
 We saw him from the window look with her,
 But come he will not, though we call and call.
David. She said our brother wearied at his play,
 That he must rest; and one night more, she said,

She keeps him in her room. Let us away

To find him gifts while yet the sun is red!

Louise. Now pleasant lie the shallows, where the gold

Green ripple shakes afar the diamond bells.

I'll fill a basket high as it will hold

With charms and pebbles and the fairy shells!

Hugh. In the full stream, like strands of drowning hair,

The silken rushes bend them to the shore.

I'll braid them to a banner he shall bear,

When he is captain of his troop once more!

Stephana. Down in the grove a bird has dropped a plume

Of dazzling snow. I'll run, before the star,

And find it, and I'll make him in his room

A bonny hat as white as white clouds are!

David. How sad our mother called: "Good-by, good-by,

Dear David and Louise, and darling Hugh,

Stephana sweet,—good-by! The day must die.

To-morrow come. I shall have need of you!"

Louise. O hurry, let us down to grove and shore!

For soon the dark will touch the dial's hour.

Oh, we shall bring him back to us once more

With little gifts, and with each gift a flower!

III.

MOTHER AND CHILD.

The Child. What makes the world so beautiful, so still?

The Mother. Love makes it so.

The Child.

Is love in everything?

The Mother. Oh, that I do believe! Though hide it will,

Somewhere at every depth its wonders cling.

The Child. The world seems very beautiful . . . and yet . . .

The Mother. What yet? What thought is with you, little son?

The Child. I heard the story of a banished set

Packed close upon a ship—the lepers!—One

Stood out from all the others, lean and bold,

Scaly, with eyes that pierced the twilight through.

And those on whom he looked would horror hold.

O mother, tell me that it was not true!